MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
A Museum Of County Life

IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • MARCH 2004

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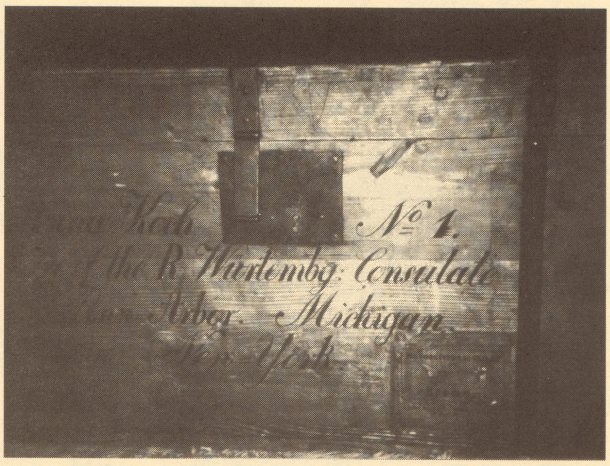
Annual dues are individual, $15; couple/family $25; student or senior (60+) $10; senior couple $19; business/association $50; patron $100.

Your Museum

It certainly is nice to have money. Several donations are allowing us to do things we've been hoping to do. Soon we will have **smoke detectors** in every room of the museum (we do have sprinklers but we thought having smoke alarms an even better idea) and a **doorbell with an intercom** that will allow us to buzz in anyone at the door. This is especially important for docents and others who may be working alone in the museum. We also finally have a **telephone system** that works on all three floors and **a waterbug** will be installed to let us know when we have water in the basement. Thanks to all our donors who made this possible.



Here is the trunk from the Emma Schmid estate which belonged to her great great grandmother Anna Koch, who probably arrived in Ann Arbor in the 1850s.

According to **Patty Creal** our Treasurer and **Tom Freeman** who handles the Bach Funds, we are doing well in the money department. Our gripper has brought in over $6,000, donations and dues are coming in (please remember to send in your dues if you haven't already) and the Bach Funds are well balanced and growing steadily. We are very happy with the investment portfolio developed for us by AXA or as Tom says "we have great asset allocation."

Our tall case clock from the Sara Elinor Parker estate recently restored by John Moore of Saline. Photo: S. Wineberg

We were contacted by **Jim Kosteva** of the University of Michigan about helping with their dedication of the Perry Building at 330 Packard Road. It turned out to be just when we are hosting our Annual Meeting, so a wonderful venue finally presented itself to us. Look for more details in future ***Impressions.***

Collections Chair **Judy Chrisman** is working hard to get our things out of Willow Run and into appropriate hands. She visited the collections with **Pat Mahjer** of the **Hack House** in Milan and they were loaned a small table, a bed suite, and a bookshelf. She is still looking for storage space of all least 400 square feet if anyone knows of some available. Judy also accepted a piece of old wood water pipe that was found on Miller Street under the railroad viaduct. It is 13 inches in length and much easier to display than our current example. It was found around 1965 and donated by **Eunice Hendrix.** It probably dates to the 1880s.

I also need to correct a mistake from last month's ***Impressions***. The **Sara Elinor Parker** estate, not Chapin, donated the 19th century tall case clock with moon dial and second hand in 1941. **John Moore** of Saline, the restorer, says it is an American case but the works may be English—it dings (strikes a bell) rather than chimes. Come and see it in our front parlor!

BARRY LARUE

Ypsilanti's Historic Buildings

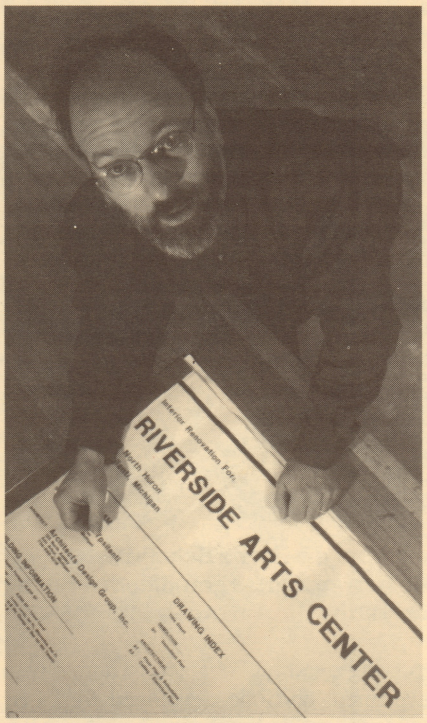


Photo of Barry LaRue, courtesy The *Ann Arbor News*.

Over 50 people attended a fascinating talk and slide show on the historic buildings of Ypsilanti at the Riverside Arts Center at 76 N. Huron St. Barry LaRue is a native of Ypsilanti and has a B.A. from EMU in Speech and Dramatic Arts. He now serves on the Technical Staff at the University of Michigan Power Center, Lydia Mendelssohn Theater and Hill Auditorium. Barry has been a member of the Ypsilanti Historical Society and the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation for years and was appointed to the Historic District Commission in 1987. He was elected to the City Council in 1991, 1993, 1998 and 2002. As a member of these groups, he worked hard on the purchase and restoration of the Riverside Arts Center (formerly the Masonic Temple) and serves as a Trustee and Chair of the Facility Committee. While on City Council he introduced a resolution to form a commission to oversee fundraising efforts to restore the sculpture of Demetrius Ypsilanti by the Water Tower, and was the driving force behind removing the "cheese grater" façade from the Ypsilanti City Hall. The façade was restored to its 1940 condition when it served as the Ypsilanti Savings Bank. Barry believes his lifelong interest in local history is a result of his father's interest (his dad was also a native). Let's hear it for parental involvement!

"I want to welcome you to the Ward Three of Ypsilanti as a representative of City Council. The Third Ward is home to most of the city's historic district–it has the downtown, Depot Town and the historic East Side of Ypsilanti. We are always happy to get new people into this facility and we're happy to encourage you to volunteer here at the Riverside Arts Center. We have a newsletter written by Tom Dodd, our Newsletter Chair.

I hope you will bear with me since I don't have a script. Most of this will be about history but some will be about economic development too. Here is a picture of Demetrius Ypsilanti, a general in the Greek Revolution against the Turks in the 1820s. The country of Greece was just emerging when some of the local investors were sitting around a smoky bar in Detroit in the mid 1820s discussing their lands where the Chicago Road and Huron River joined. They planned to subdivide their acreage into lots and create a town, but what to name it? One investor suggested Palmyra, being from Palmyra, New York and another suggested Waterville. Yet another, perhaps Augustus Woodward (the judge in Detroit who laid out that city), suggested Ypsilanti. He argued that it was 1826 and the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The newspapers were calling Ypsilanti Greece's George Washington, so it would be a patriotic gesture to name our town after him. [An aside from the audience joked about how drunk they must have been, and Barry responded by saying there is little Greek in Ypsilanti except the restaurants run by people of Greek descent.]

I'm showing you a map of Ypsilanti in around 1879 or 1875 and in those days there were six or seven wards (between 1845-1947). The city basically ended at Prospect Street, Harriet, Summit and Forest Avenue. That was the boundary for many years. This is the aftermath of the Fire of 1851, and here is the corner of Michigan and Huron where Dalat, the Vietnamese restaurant is now. You can see that not much is left from that era, when most of the buildings were wood. When one caught on fire, the rest were toast as well. Of course there was no fire department or municipal water supply at that time so it was very hard to fight these fires. The next era of buildings were all brick and these **Commercial Italianate** buildings are what we still have today. Some date to right after the fire, to 1852. There is a stone plaque above one of the windows with a name and the date of 1852. The cornice was added later and this photo was taken around 1889-1890. The large white building in the center of the block, the Ypsi Cycle Shop, was built ca. 1855 and is one of the only **Gothic Commercial** structures that I've ever seen. It has a quatrefoil window in the attic and the peaked Gothic windows as well. Looking at the same block from a different vantage point, you can see **Hewitt Hall** (1859), a three story

House at S. Huron and Buffalo in Ypsilanti probably in the 1890s. Courtesy Barry LaRue.

building with an auditorium on the third floor. Later it was called the Armory and used for military drills. My father's insurance office was on the second floor, but by that time they had removed the third story around 1936. The building is still there.

The famous "sheds of Congress Avenue" (Michigan Avenue used to be called Congress Street before 1912 when there was a concerted statewide effort to rename all parts of the Chicago Road Michigan Avenue) were a sore point in the 1890s. In 1899, our mayor Chauncey Joselyn was tired of picking up the paper and reading editorials from Ann Arbor deriding them (there was always a lot of bitterness because Ann Arbor, the County Seat, also became the home to the University of Michigan). Canvas awnings fronted on commercial buildings in Ann Arbor while Ypsilanti still had wooden sheds covering the plank sidewalks in front of their commercial buildings. So, City Council passed an ordinance requiring the owners of commercial buildings to remove the sheds by a certain date. The date came, the sheds were still up, and an outraged mayor hired a gang to demolish them at night. This photo shows them the next day with the debris of the sheds in the road.

The druggist holding a small mouth bass in the rear of Weinmann's Drugs. Courtesy Barry LaRue.

A 1941 view of the same block shows that nothing really changed much. An image from 1951 also shows little change. In 1952, however, they began to put false facades on these buildings and the last building was covered in 1966. In the short span of 15 years they managed to change the look of the town that had been there for 100 years! By then no one was using the upper floors and these facades kept out the light to these floors which made them even less likely to be anything but storerooms.

Sometime in the 1980s, a preservation ethic emerged and the false facades began to be removed. The first was the Ypsi Cycle shop. Many are still in existence however. Ralph [Beebe] mentioned that I was on the Commercial Loan Board when the city hired the Ann Arbor firm Preservation Urban Design around 1979 and they produced a very nice document showing the current look of each block and what it could look like if the buildings were restored properly. The city reacted by setting up low-interest loans and grants to encourage these restorations. Many of these photos were taken by the Downtown Development Authority to document the changes that resulted. Here is the same block taken three weeks ago and you can see that everything has been restored except two buildings, the Dalat Building and the old Mellencamp's Mens Store. So, you can see we've come a long way from everything almost being obliterated to a look from the 19th century.

A shot of the 200 block of Michigan Avenue is one I love, probably from a Normal College Yearbook advertising a business in the block. The Ypsilanti Opera House is the large building in the foreground and that blew down in the Cyclone (Tornado) of 1893. It was a gorgeous building. The buildings on either side of it are still there. What replaced it was the Wuerth Theater, a cousin to the Wuerth Theater in Ann Arbor, where Conor O'Neill's is now on Main Street. This photo is from 1929, when sound was just beginning to appear and it is advertised as 'pictures with voice.' Unfortunately, the theater suffered from a lack of maintenance and was famous for having rats—my dad always preferred the Martha Washington for that reason. But the Wuerth had a balcony! This theater, which was at the rear portion of the building, was demolished in 1959 for a parking lot in a deal where the city gave the Butterfield Corporation a tax write off. The front building was always separate from the auditorium and that portion remains today. It looks pretty good today and you see the site of the old Hawkins House at the right (Michigan and Washington) which was having a cornice restored in 1989. The Hawkins House was first built in 1835 and was the largest hotel in Ypsilanti until it was demolished in the 1870s and relocated in brick in the middle of the block. When Michigan Avenue was still a stage coach route from Detroit to Chicago, the Hawkins House was a place many travelers stopped for the night. It later turned into a flophouse known as the Greystone Hotel.

The Weinmann-Matthews Drug Store on Huron Street in 1897. Courtesy Barry LaRue.

The former Michigan Avenue Adult Book Store was a business and an eyesore that City Council encouraged the Police to get out of the downtown. They were caught money-laundering and they got busted and left. The city sold the building to the JC Beal Company which is working with the neighbor to put in an elevator and restore the facades. This is an exciting development for retail and residential space.

An ordinance was passed in the 1950s requiring the removal of the wood cornices since they were considered dangerous. This is why most towns in Michigan have cornice-less buildings! As the aluminum facades

Ladies talk on the telephone at the Weinmann-Matthews Drug Store in 1897. Courtesy Barry LaRue.

went up, the cornices came down. Today, many of these cornices have been restored, using historic photographs.

The Tap Room Bar had one of the nicer jobs of remodeling with porcelain enamel panels and interesting art work. It was decided at some point by council that some of these 1950s facades should remain and this one in particular is a nice example of the style.

My father died in 1998, and when going through his things I discovered five rolls of film taken in the summer of 1937 (when he was 16) of various things all over the city, such as parades, soap box derbys and buildings at the Normal College. He was often leaning out the window of my grandfather's insurance office at 130 W. Michigan, a window that I leaned out of in the 1960s and 70s!

The National Bank was built in 1903. It eventually became wider but a fire demolished part of the building. The bank lost all of their records but luckily the bank itself was spared. What replaced this predates the historic district ordinance and it makes a great argument for one! I think it could have looked so much better with some guidance, so that the scale and style would have been more appropriate. Here is what the National Bank looked like before they tore off the cheese grater, then a photo of after, and here it is today, not quite perfect and still needing some work. The stone wasn't really restored and the metal cornice at the top was never replaced. Nevertheless, it's a big improvement.

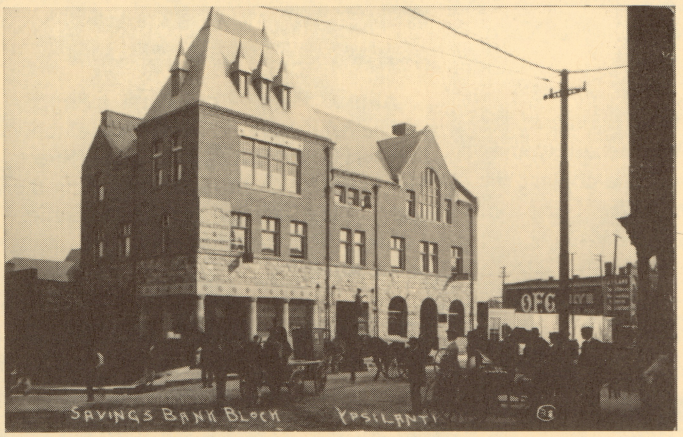
The Corner Health Center, known earlier as the Weinmann and Matthews Drug Store, started life on Huron Street until about 1899 (this photo is 1897) but later moved to Michigan Ave where it was for many years. I work with a gentleman who found some glass slides in the trash on Liberty Street in Ann Arbor about ten years ago. I think someone was cleaning out an attic. There are 150 4x5 glass negatives that were in their original boxes dated 1897-1908 and belonged to the Weinmann family who lived on S. Huron St. Someone eventually figured out they were of Ypsilanti and suggested me to verify them. I did eventually have to give them back but I digitized most of the best ones. They are great photos. There is also a great picture of the interior of the drug store with two lovely ladies using the telephone. If you enlarge the photo you can see what's written on all the bottles, like digitalis and alum, and the herbal preparations and poisons that were around then. Another image is of the druggist showing off his 4 ¾ lb. small mouth bass in the back of the shop. Also in the same box was an image taken in what is now the municipal parking lot on N. Huron which is a rare picture of an African-American showing a lot of buildings in the background.

The Martha Washington Theater which you can see in James Mann's book, was built in 1915 and this may be the second marquee—the third is what is up now (on Déjà vu)—our competition in live entertainment. We provide some balance in what they offer. What they offered was mostly film, probably with some vaudeville, but the fly space is small and they had no orchestra pit.

The Ypsilanti Savings Bank Building (1887) which eventually became the Ypsilanti City Hall about 1977, was designed by Mason and Rice (famous Detroit architecture firm) and it is really one of the first high-style commercial buildings constructed in Ypsilanti. It is very distinctive, with a wild collection of styles including Richardsonian Romanesque with a French Chateau top. We are pleased the city came close to restoring the lower façade after so many years of it being covered with aluminum. This 1910 photo, taken on an average day, shows utter traffic congestion with horses pedestrians and carriages. Here is a photo with the cheese grater in the late 1960s (how could they not see how unattractive this was?). In the 1940s, the bank added a wing with an elevator and decided to flatten the roof but retained the Richardsonian façade which gives it an odd look. This is one of the projects I'm the most proud of, even though we couldn't restore the original roof.

Another building by Mason and Rice is the Mill Building about a year after the Savings Bank was built ca. 1888. The builder of the building, Oliver Ainsworth, probably met the architects and builders of the bank while it was under construction. He thus was able to hire them after they finished the bank to replace his burned mill. The mill always had a steam powered engine in it, with a large chimney in the back for the boiler [this building is opposite Haab's]. In 1989 it became a restaurant and was in pretty poor shape. Upper windows were open to the elements and birds and the roof needed replacement. Five years ago Bill Kinley bought this building and has invested a lot of money to restore it and it looks fantastic. It has retail on the first floor and luxury

Very few pictures of blacks exist and here is one with 'Ginny," behind the Weinman-Matthews Drug Store on Huron St. Courtesy Barry LaRue.



The State Savings Bank before it had its roof lowered and the cheese grater attached. Today it is the Ypsilanti City Hall and has been restored to its 1940s appearance. Courtesy Barry LaRue.

apartments on the second and third floors. This was a tax-act project so changes had to be approved by the National Park Service. They carefully removed about 10 layers of paint on the brick, repointed the brick, and replaced worn bricks with some from the back.

Oliver Ainsworth's house in 1969, up West Michigan Avenue near the Fire Department, is shown before the city tore it down for the present Fire Station. Some of these slides are those my father took. Back in the 1960s, my father was involved in the Ypsilanti Historical Commission which predated the Historic District Commission. He got interested in documenting things that he thought were endangered—things likely to be torn down. He took his pictures and compared them to images in older books and records from the Museum and did slide presentations for civic groups. Here is the Soap Box Derby of 1937.

You will notice the GAR Hall when you go to your cars in the parking lot. This is 110 and 108 Pearl St. The GAR was the equivalent of the American Legion of the Civil War. There was a large contingent of Civil War Veterans in Ypsilanti who greatly affected the politics of the U.S. in the 1880s and 1890s. No one could run for president without being a member of the GAR and being able to recount his or her battlefield experiences. They never figured out that they needed to get younger men to join so they eventually died out. The last member died in 1937 and by the early 1970s, there was a hole the size of Rhode Island in the roof! Rain was coming in and it was in danger of demolition by neglect. Natalie Edmonds joined the Women's Relief Corps as a ruse—she really wanted to get control of the building to keep it from falling down! She actually succeeded. Eventually the building was leased for 99 years to someone who restored both 110 and 108 Pearl. The upstairs apartment has beautiful oak trim and a special feature for the cat box! This even beats Ann Arbor.

Across the street is the Sharp Tag and Label Company and notice Henry Glover is the president. Another investor in Ypsilanti was Fred Anders whose house is where Mayor Cheryl Farmer lives now on Huron St.

The octagon house on S. Huron Street belonged to Helen McGanter, one of the earliest female physicians in Washtenaw. She and her husband built it in the 1850s and it served as a sanitarium involving drinking mineral water and taking walks and having shock treatment. She housed her patients in her house and used a long stairway down to the Huron River where they bathed. By the 1980s it was a derelict rental property and suffered from a fire in which someone died. It was shortly thereafter demolished. Now Ypsi only has one octagon left.

The Ladies Library Building was John and Mary Ann Starkweather's house after they moved into town in 1883 from Cornell and Huron River Drive (a Greek Revival still there). Mr. Starkweather died around 1884 and shortly after that Mrs. Starkweather inherited a large estate from her uncle in Chicago who built the Newberry Library. She went from being comfortable to being a millionaire! She made a lot of generous gifts to the city, including this house, which was given to the Ladies Library Assn. after she died in 1897. They built the front porch on it. She also donated Starkweather Chapel at the Normal College (now EMU), Starkweather Chapel at Highland Cemetery and the fountain formerly in front of the Savings Bank for dogs, cats, horses and humans. It was either taken for scrap for WWI or was stolen—no one seems to know what happened to it. This building is now a single-family residence once again.

Across the street is the Cornwell House, built by the owner of the local paper mill. When it was built it was the largest single family home on the Detroit-Chicago Railroad and it had the first telephone in Washtenaw County. Here is how it looked in 1969 before it was restored. It suffered from a fire in the 1980s after which vandals stole some of the stained glass and marble mantels.

The Josiah Sanders house on S. Huron St. is a beautiful building, designed by the same Detroit architect who designed the Cleary College Building about 1889. Mr. Sanders was in the clothing business. It is an example of a house that never really suffered from neglect or inappropriate changes and has been well maintained all along.

Here are images of four houses from a souvenir book: the Hutchinson Mansion (the "H" in S&H green stamps), Glover Mansion and the Griffin House. These have been lovingly restored in the past decade by very sympathetic owners. Here is a picture of a beautiful Queen Anne in 1970 and now, after inappropriate siding has been added and a lovely porch removed. This is one of the things we don't like to see here and that make me sad.

Another nice rehab is at Washington and Washtenaw across from the First Methodist Church. The HDC worked with the owner for about a year or two. It was basically a flop house—eleven units—and one day in 1989 an angry boyfriend threw a gasoline bomb through a window which burned a major portion of the roof off. It just missed being demolished for a parking lot. The HDC came up with a package of incentives and found another owner who rehabilitated it for affordable housing.

Many other slides show the nice rehabilitations which have occurred all over Ypsilanti since the 1970s of both houses and commercial buildings in Depot Town and Cross Street as well as Michigan Avenue and Huron St. We can compare old photos from 1937 to those of today and see that many still look the same.

We now return to the Masonic Temple Building that the Masons had left in the 1980s. It was owned by Materials Unlimited which used it to store bath tubs, mantels, porch posts and doors and they had a glass beveling studio in the kitchen and used the basement for refinishing projects. They owned it for eight-ten years and didn't do much but keep a roof over it.

They didn't spend any money on it to keep it up. The Atomic Car Wash was also next door and it was derelict as well. The Downtown Development Authority purchased both buildings and demolished the car wash for the parking lot and park next to the building. It received grants to restore the building and restore and repair the cornice.

I end with Miss Ypsilanti, the logo for the Hay and Todd Manufacturing Company that manufactured Ypsilanti Underwear who says "Never rip, never tear, buy Ypsilanti Underwear."

Volunteers Urgently Needed

Like to write? I will be giving up writing the **newsletter** after May so that I can travel with my husband on his sabbatical. Any takers out there? We'd love to hear from you.

Like to garden? We're looking for someone to coordinate volunteers to oversee planting, weeding and watering in the **garden**. We have lots of Indians but no chiefs, so if you like to manage people, this is for you. We will be having the Professional Volunteer Corps work in the garden on **Saturday, May 8th** and they will be painting the walls of the house as well. Anyone who wishes to help is more than welcome.

Like investments? We are looking for a non-board member to serve on our **Endowment Committee**. This involves attending either one or two meetings a year and is not a big commitment of time. Let us know if you are interested in any of the positions. Call us at **734-662-9092** or email **wchs-500@ameritech.net.**

Query

Does anyone know of photos of the interior of the Old Washtenaw County Courthouse? If so, please contact the editor -- Susan Wineberg at swines@umich.edu or 734-662-9092.

Program Schedule 2004

Vice President and Program Chair **Ralph Beebe** has done a fantastic job of planning interesting programs and venues for the upcoming year. All programs are held the third Sunday of the month at 2 PM. The talks are free and open to the public. Members receive a post card before the meeting with instructions on how to reach the lecture. Light refreshments are served after the lecture.

SUNDAY • MARCH 21 • 2 PM
SALINE DISTRICT LIBRARY
555 MAPLE RD. • SALINE

Sue Kosky, WCHS Board Member, manager of our museum shop and one of our dedicated gardeners, will talk about her book ***Historic Saline: Settlement to 1950***. This book is another in the Arcadia Series on "Images of America" which Grace Shackman's books were part of as well.

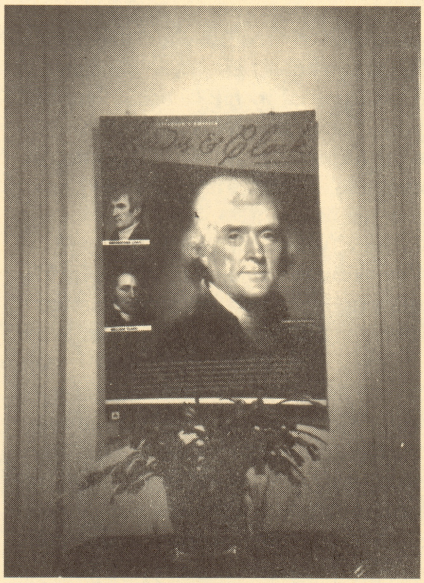
SUNDAY • APRIL 18 • 2 PM
COURTHOUSE SQUARE BUILDING
100 S. FOURTH AVE. • ANN ARBOR

Ray Detter, Louisa Pieper and **Grace Shackman** will talk about **The Downtown Street Exhibit Program** that is getting rave reviews all over the U.S. and winning awards as well. You've probably noticed the glass markers in the sidewalks around town with old photographs of buildings no longer standing. A new group of 'frames' as they are called, which are scattered around the campus and deal with University history, was dedicated in July.

WEDNESDAY • MAY 19 • 6 PM
ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK

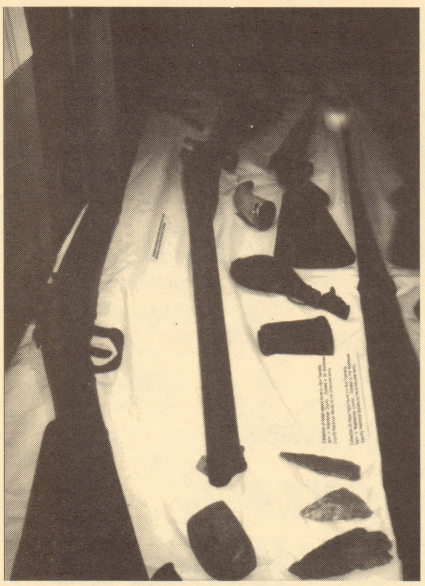
Annual Meeting and Potluck Supper will be held at the old **Perry School**, now the UM Perry Building, 330 Packard Street. The University will be re-dedicating the building that day and we will be participating in the events as well as hosting our meeting.

New Exhibit Is Open



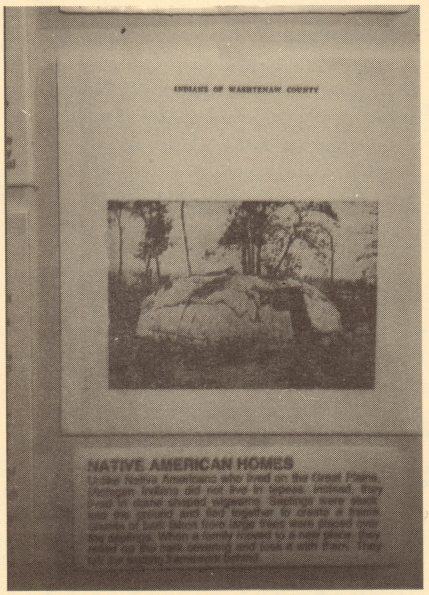
Our current exhibit on Lewis and Clark, whose journey began 200 years under the direction of President Thomas Jefferson. Photo S. Wineberg

Our **Lewis and Clark Exhibit** is up and running and getting good reviews. The exhibit will be up **until May 5th** and is a 15-poster exhibit created by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation to examine Jefferson's vision and the journey of Lewis and Clark from Missouri to the Pacific Ocean. Our exhibit is a visual reference for the events and the discoveries made during this journey which begun 200 years ago this year. Our exhibit also looks at the indigenous culture of Michigan and Washtenaw County. On display are various Native American artifacts in our collection, including Iroqouois and Potawatomi baskets, moccasins, wampum belts and tobacco pipes. Period guns,powder horns, spears, Indian arrow-



Firearms and Indian artifacts from our collections are showcased in connection with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Photo: S. Wineberg

heads, tools, cooking pots and utensils and quilts from Washtenaw County are also on display. We also have lots of books on Lewis and Clark in our Museum Store. The exhibit is open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from noon-4 PM and by appointment. Call **734-662-9092** or email **wchs-500@ameritech.net.** We also learned that the Ann Arbor District Library's Summer Reading Project will be focused on Lewis and Clark as well. For more information on that, contact **Ira Lax** at **734-327-8365.**



Michigan Indians lived in wigwams in 1804. Photo S. Wineberg

Indian baskets from our collections are on display now. Photo S. Wineberg

SUSAN WINEBERG

Around The Town

Kempf House at 312 S. Division announces its **Noon Lecture Series** for spring on **Wednesdays,** noon to 1:00 P.M. Admission, $2.00 (members, $1.00) (Parking is available in the large public lot just south of the House).

March 10, ***Remembering Raul Wallenberg by*** **Penny Schreiber,** the Managing Editor of the ***Ann Arbor Observer*** and member of the UM Wallenberg Committee, Ms. Schreiber will share her knowledge of this great man and his legacy.

March 14, ***The Auto Industry From Tinkerers to Titans*** by **Sinclair Powell,** a retired attorney and member of many antique car clubs, will talk about his coming manuscript on how the automobile changed Detroit from village to metropolis.

March 24, ***Albert Kahn: America's Master Industrial Architect,*** by **Sally Bund**, the Assistant Archivist in Architectural Collections at the UM Bentley Historical Library, will cover Kahn's career through slides of his buildings in Detroit and at UM and drawings from the Bentley's archives.

March 31, ***The Roofs of Ann Arbor and the Rock of the Slate Valley*** by **Dr. John Ellis,** Assistant Professor of History at UM Flint, who will tell the story of the quarrying industry and the Welsh immigrant community that produced the colored slate we see on historic Ann Arbor buildings.

April 7, ***Over the Hill?*** **by** Kenneth Clein, AIA **Senior Project Manager at** Quinn/Evans Architects, will share his vision for the restoration of UM's Hill Auditorium and his thoughts on the importance of preserving old buildings.

April 14, ***Book Collecting: How and Why,*** by **Jay Platt,** the owner of West Side Books for the past 28 years. Mr. Platt will advise would-be book collectors and appraise books brought in by members of the audience.

April 21, ***Imagine/Align,*** **by Susan Skarsgard,** an Ann Arbor artist and General Motors product designer, "A wall of gold" will appear in the Nichols Arboretum - a true community work of art.

April 28, ***Folk Art Friends,*** **by Laurie Simpson** will talk about her life as a fiber artist and about the book that she and her sister Polly Minick have written featuring Laurie's quilts and Polly's rugs. Call **734- 994-4898** or visit their new website at ***www.kempfhouse.org.***

The Kempf House has a number of new initiatives. They have launched a fundraising campaign to establish an endowment fund to cover future expenses. In the past two years they've repaired the roof and basement and are now in the process of remodeling the kitchen, a long overdue project. Fiscal cutbacks make this a necessity since the house is owned by the City of Ann Arbor. Also in the works are new programs on storytelling and music recitals, and a new signpost in the front yard. They have an impressive lineup for the noon lecture series as well and I encourage all to attend.

Preservation Eastern has several events in the works as well. On **Friday, March 12,** Lisa **Jacobs** of the Surveying Museum in Lansing, **Mary Ann Johnson** of the Rouge Factory Tours in Dearborn, **Henry Amick** of the Detroit Historical Museum and **Denise Pike,** City Planner of Mt. Clemens will be speaking at the McKenny Union on the EMU campus at 7 PM. Refreshments provided after the panel discussion. On **March 20,** they are hosting a **Fort Wayne Volunteer Day.**

The Observatory continues its outstanding series of lectures on **Tuesday March 9,** 3 PM, with **Keith** Snedegar speaking on 19th century American astronomers in South Africa and on **Tuesday, April 6,** 3 PM when **Lauren Sickels-Taves** speaks on **Preserving Lighthouses.** The Observatory is

Around The Town (cont.)

located at 1398 E. Ann Street (corner Observatory) and is an 1854 restored observatory with all its original instruments. Tours are available as well. Call **734-763-2230** or see **www.DetroitObservatory.umich.edu.** They are celebrating their **Sesquicentennial** this year, so all the more reason to go and see for yourself! The QuinnEvans Architects' newsletter notes that their restoration work on the Observatory is featured in a new book on museum design entitled **Designing the World's Best Museums and Art Galleries.**

The **Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County** continues its program series with a talk on **Sunday, March 28,** 1:30 PM by **John Konvalinka** on "***Searching for New Jersey Ancestors***." Meetings are at the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, off East Huron River Drive and Clark Road. Look for Parking Lot M and signs. This month the lecture will be held in a different room than usual. To learn more about the society visit **www.hvcn.org/info/gswc** or call **734-483-2799**. The **April** meeting will be on the **25th with Elaine Kuhn** explaining how to use PERSI.

The **Old Fourth Ward Association,** a neighborhood group advocating for improvements to the Old Fourth Ward Historic District, now has a website. See **www.oldfourthward.com** and learn about living and working in this fascinating neighborhood (of course, it's my neighborhood!). Many outreach projects are in the works, including monthly meetings and historic signage mentioning the district on the street signs. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the group and a major celebration is planned. We'll keep you posted.

SUSAN WINEBERG

Around The County

Manchester has finally reached us so we can let you know about the programs they offer. On **Thursday, March 11,** Chelsea resident **George Till** will speak on "***The Civil War and Recent Reenactments.***" He is a member of the 24th Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment. On **Thursday April 8, Carl Curtis** of Manchester will speak on "***Stereo Viewing Scopes***" and display some of his antique scopes. And on **Thursday, May 13, Jerry Waters** of Manchester will speak on "***Buildings in Miniature,***" his modeling hobby. All lectures are free and open to the public and begin at 7:30 PM in the Village Hall, 912 City Road. For more information call **Jim Wilson** at **734-428-0407.**

Supporters of the county's **Natural Areas Preservation Program** will soon have a new way to explore the 450 acres acquired so far: maps will be available soon on the **Washtenaw County Parks and Rec** website, rather than as printed documents. The acreage covers four parks: 137 acres in Scio Twp, 185 acres in Freedom, 56 acres in Bridgewater and 64 acres in Superior. Parks Planning Supt **Tom Freeman** (and WCHS Board member) says the online version is an attempt to avoid paper waste and save money. The parcels were acquired through a millage passed in 2000 which approved a 10-year quarter-mill tax to protect natural areas. It is expected to reach $27.5 million through 2011 and the money will be used to protect significant wetlands, woods and bodies of water. For more information check **www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/parks_recreation/pr_index.html.**

Another event on the rural preservation scene is the active participation in the **Washtenaw Land Trust** by members of the **Washtenaw County Farm Bureau**, both of which want to preserve local farmland. An ***Ann Arbor News*** article from February 15, 2004 outlined their reasoning—WLT is more focused on preserving open space while the Farm Bureau is worried about the future of farming and agriculture. By working together, they hope to educate the public and farmers about land use. Right now, WLT is responsible for preserving about 1,650 acres in Washtenaw County.

The **Saline Area Historical Society** continues its program series this month with a lecture on **Wednesday, March 17,** 7:30, by **Peggy Haines,** Washtenaw County Clerk (and also a WCHS Board member) on "***Property Records.***" The talk will be held at the Saline Railroad Depot Museum, 402 N. Ann Arbor, corner Bennett and is free and open to the public. On **Wednesday, April 21, Wallie Patrick** will be speaking on "***Genealogy Research.***" And on **Saturday, May 15**, the **Rentschler Farm** will re-open during an all day celebration of "**Springtime on the Farm.**" Call **734-944-0442** or **734-944-0713** for more details.

Put **Saturday, May 1,** down on your calendar for a drive to Milan. **The Milan Area Historical Society** is sponsoring a yard sale at 775 County Street and they'll have all kinds of goodies from 9-3. Proceeds will help the restoration of the Hack House interior. For more information, call **Carolyn Gotts 734-439-1917.**

Last but not least, **save the dates of Saturday and Sunday May 15-16!** On that weekend, the **Washtenaw County Consortium**, which last year produced that fabulous throw illustrating the historic buildings of the county, will be hosting "**Wander Washtenaw,**" a tour of these very same sites. One ticket will get you into all venues, including our own Museum on Main Street, which will be hosting an exhibit by the African American Museum on the Underground Railroad in Washtenaw County. Details are still being worked out but they expect to have 16 of their 26 members participating. We'll keep you posted.

SUSAN WINEBERG

Beyond Washtenaw

Don't forget the Annual **Michigan Preservation Conference** by the **Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Thursday, April 22-Friday April 23.** The **Greater Rochester** area is the setting for the 24th Annual Conference and sites include the Van Hoosen Farm, Paint Creek Community Art Center, Oakland University and Meadow Brook Hall among others. The theme is ***"Historic Communities Working Together."*** You can register online through their website at **www.mhpn.org/.**

A wonderful exhibit is planned in **Clinton** to celebrate native son and well-known architect **Wirt C. Rowland. Sharon Scott,** the director of the exhibit, informs us that the exhibit will be held **May 22-June 19** at the **Clinton Township Public Library**, 100 Brown Street. Rowland grew up in Clinton and kept his family home there until he died. He is most famous as the architect of the Guardian, Buhl and Penobscot Buildings in Detroit. He also worked with Albert Kahn on the interior of Hill Auditorium. He designed Kirk in the Hills in Bloomfield Hills and the Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church in Detroit as well. He also has a building in Ann Arbor: The Victor Vaughan Building (originally a mens' dorm on the campus of the University of Michigan and coincidentally where I work!). He also built the Mortuary Chapel and Kirker Addition to the UCC Church in Clinton. The exhibit will travel to Detroit and be in various venues from July-September. They won a substantial grant from the Michigan Humanities Council. Check out **www.wirtrowland.org** or contact Sharon at **517-456-7198.**

And speaking of historic churches in Detroit, the **Fort Street Presbyterian Church** is now marketing itself as a historic facility **for weddings** to anyone, not just members. The **1855 Gothic Revival Church** needs new members and this is one way they have to

show off their beautiful church to others. The church is right on Fort Street at Third, not far from the Detroit River and the Pontchartrain Hotel. You can learn more by calling **313-961-4533** or looking at their website **www.fortstreet.org.**

Mike Mort of Sturgis, Michigan is the Executive Producer of a documentary called "***From Moccasins to Main Street***", on the 300 year history of the **old Chicago Road** from Detroit to Chicago. It is being funded with state and federal grants and will be on public TV stations in 2006. If you have any information you'd like them to know about, contact Mike at **Michiganave@voyager.net** or call **269-651-1686**. They are looking for old footage or written documentation about the road (now US-12).

A daylong symposium on **Michigan's Copper Country** will be held **July 1-2** in **Houghton**, Michigan to coincide with the Copper Country Homecoming and Old Settlers Ball. Sessions will be held on the campus of Michigan Tech University. For more information contact **Erik Nordberg** at **copper@mtu.edu.**

The **Historical Society of Michigan's** Annual **UP History Conference** will be held in Iron Mountain on **June 18-20.** The local host is the Menominee Range Historical Foundation Museum. If you like to plan ahead, the state conference and **Annual Meeting** will be **October 15-17** in **St. Joseph,** Michigan and **Mulling Over Michigan** will be on **November 3** at Macomb Community College. The Society is now accepting nominations for awards for local societies, businesses, distinguished volunteer service, and restoration. These are given at the Annual Meeting in the fall. Check out their website at **www.hsofmich.org/** to learn more.

A seminar sponsored by the Detroit Chapter of the **American Society of Appraisers,** MHPN and the SHPO will be held March 12 at the Historic First Congregational Church in Detroit, 2390 Woodward Ave, from 1-5 (lunch before hand) to discuss "***Historic Properties—Preservation and Valuation.***" Seven speakers will be on hand to discuss various aspects of this issue now that we are one of 20 states offering tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic properties. You must register for this seminar so contact Michael Collins, at **248-635-5500.**

Preservation Wayne is looking for volunteers to help with their walking tours from May-September. They need tour guides, researchers, trainers, office support and more. The tours are held every Saturday morning and Tuesday evening through the spring and summer. If you want to get involved, email **preswayne@aol.com**, call **313-577-3559** or contact **Devon Akmon** at **734-417-0753.**

Many people are getting involved in helping to clean up **Fort Wayne**, a historic fort along the Detroit River owned by the Detroit Historical Museum. Long closed to the public, they are working at getting it open again and in better shape. If you are interested in helping, you can contact **Kathy Keefer,** Director of Preservation Eastern, at **kkeefer2@aol.com**.

We just learned of an exhibit ***"Modest to Mansion: Frank Lloyd Wright in Detroit"*** now on display at **Cranbrook Art Museum,** 39221 Woodward Avenue in Bloomfield Hills until **April 4**. Contact them for more information at **248-645-3323**

Kalamazoo's Living History Show on **March 20** (9-5) and **21**(9-4) is about "***American's First Frontier: 1750-1792***" There is an admission fee. For more information contact **269-327-4557** or visit their website at **www.KalamazooShow.com.**

The **Plymouth Historical Museum** continues its series on the inventions in the 20th century with talks on **Thursday, March 11** on "***The Telephone,***" **Thursday April 8** on "***The Radio,***" Thursday **May13 on** "***The Television,***" and **Thursday June 10** on "***The Computer.***" The Museum is at 155 S. Main St. in Plymouth. Call **734-455-6940** or check out **www.plymouthhistory.org.**

You can check out the latest on **Ottawa Beach Historic District** (Holland) through a new website **www.historicottawabeach.com.** It is on the National Register of Historic Places and they have a terrific website we're told.

The **Tecumseh Area Historical Society** is planning their annual fundraiser, the **Flea Market**, on the Promenade Weekend **May 15 and 16**. In **March Charlie Conn** will present "***Journey by Rail through Tecumseh, Part II***" and on **Thursday, April 15, Ed Hodges** presents "***Standing on Their Heads: Tecumseh's Company C in the Spanish-American War.***" You can get more information by calling **517-423-2374** or checking their website **www.historictecumseh.com.**

Northville Historical Society's Mill Race Village is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. The village will be open on Sundays starting June 13 from 1-4 and will close October 17. With their annual Pumpkin Walk. All the village buildings will be open with docents to give tours. These include the 1845 Greek Revival Presbyterian Church, the 1851 Greek Revival Hunter House, the late 19th century Interurban Station from the Farmington Line, the Yerkes House of 1873, the 1850s Cady Inn, the Oak School from 1873 and a replica of the Hersch Blacksmith Shop. All buildings were moved to the village sometime in the 1970s for the most part. For more information call **248-348-1845.**

SUSAN WINEBERG

News You Can Use

A second batch of historic sites will be featured on **HGTV**. Starting in October (oops, guess we are a little late), HGTV will feature one of the sites each month from **Save America's Treasures.** These include **Ashton Villa** in **Galveston, TX; the Pabst Mansion** in **Milwaukee; Drayton Hall** in **Charleston; Dunn Gardens** in **Seattle; Edison-Ford Winter Estates** in **Fort Myers, FL;** the **First Hermitage** in **Nashville; Hakone Gardens** in **Saratoga, CA; Leo Carillo Ranch, Carlsbad, CA; Molly Brown House, Denver; Paul Robeson house, Philadelphia; Sewall-Belmont House, Washington, D.C.; and Val-Kill** in **Hyde Park, NY.** HGTV Network has also given the National Trust for Historic Preservation $1 million for the properties' restoration. You can learn more at their website **www.hgtv.com.**

The **Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)** has a new website address. It is now **www.michigan.gov/shpo**. This simplifies things (they say). There is always a lot to look at on this site from efforts to save lighthouses, to books on preservation, tax incentives, the centennial farm program, National Landmarks in Michigan, and much more. Check it out!

You can join historic roads advocates from all over the country for four days of tours, educational sessions and debate during the fourth biennial conference on "***Preserving the Historic Road in America***" This year it is **April 22-25** in **Portland, Oregon**. You can learn more at **www.historicroads.org/.**

Next Program

Sunday • April 18 • 2 PM
Courthouse Square
100 S. Fourth Avenue

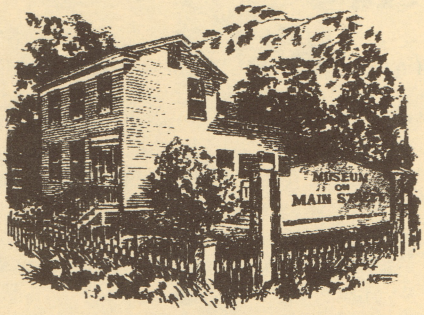
Ray Detter, Louisa Pieper and **Grace Shackman** talk about the Downtown Street Exhibit Program.

Remember When?

Here are two photographs from Chelsea, which were purchased at the Treasure Mart in Ann Arbor. One is of school kids and the other of workers. Can anyone provide more information? We will donate these to the Bentley, but we'd like to know as much as possible.

Chelsea Schoolchildren in front of their school. See anyone you know?

Chelsea Workers pose in front of their factory. Recognize anyone?



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